



## NEWS RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Sheriff J. D. "Danny" Diggs

757-890-3677

Cell: 757-897-1901

[www.yorkcounty.gov/sheriff](http://www.yorkcounty.gov/sheriff)

### **York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office Benefits from Drug Asset Seizure**

In August 2001, an investigation was initiated by the Drug Enforcement Agency, Norfolk Resident Office Task Force. This investigation involved the identification and dismantling of the ROBERT PHILLIPS ORGANIZATION, a far-reaching marijuana distribution network. This group had roots in Arizona and components operated here in the Eastern District of Virginia, as well as, Chicago, Atlanta, and New York. The group was responsible for importing hundreds of kilograms of marijuana via tractor-trailers and recreational vehicles into our area for distribution.

This long-term investigation involved the resources of the DEA Norfolk Task Force and the United States Attorney's Office in Norfolk. The Task Force consists of federally cross-designated investigators from 13 states and local law enforcement agencies including the York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office.

During this investigation, over 11,500 pounds of marijuana worth more than \$3.5 million, 15 vehicles, one boat, four tractor-trailers, and a residence in Chesapeake were seized and 11 arrests were made. On March 8 2004, Robert Phillips, the head of the organization, was convicted and sentenced to 30 years of federal incarceration.

Assets of \$1,150,560 in drug proceeds were seized from a small pull-behind trailer located in a storage facility along I-10 in Arizona. These assets are being distributed to the participating agencies. A total of 19 law enforcement offices shared in this seizure including two agencies in Richmond, three in Arizona and 12 agencies in the Tidewater region.

On January 27, 2006, the York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office received a check totaling \$51,771.82, which represents their share of \$621,261.84 seizure assets distributed in the Hampton Roads area.